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ABSTRACT

A study of academic standards in the Los Angeles Community College District resulted in the identification of a number of problems and issues, as well as recommendations, in areas pertaining to: (1) entering students--pre-enrollment misconceptions, admissions policies, late registration, and choice of courses and programs; (2) attending students--concerns with class schedules, program adjustment and withdrawal, class attendance, class requirements and grading standards, grade forgiveness and changes of grades, course credit, academic probation and disqualification, counseling, and student services; (3) leaving students--questions of designations and requirements for transfer, degrees, and occupational certificates, and of attrition; and (4) establishing and maintaining standards. General findings reveal that district standards have followed national trends; that is, grade point averages have risen as performance levels have fallen. Causes for declines include the failure to acquire basic skills in secondary school, lowering of standards by some instructors, large non-traditional student enrollments, proliferation of courses meeting graduation requirements, and television. A major problem found in many of the areas considered was the difference between stated policies and actual practices. The study report discusses the implementation of the recommendations and includes minority reports and appendices. (MB)

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REPORT

OF THE

COMMISSION ON ACADEMIC STANDARDS

Los Angeles Community College District

October, 1978

JC 780 543

FOREWORD

The Commission on Academic Standards, recommended by the Chancellor and authorized by the Board of Trustees on September 1, 1976, herewith submits its final report.

The preparation of this report has required many hours of work by each Commission member and by many staff members at the individual colleges. While any of these several individuals might disagree with certain parts of the report, all agree that it should be a call to action. A proposed plan of action is outlined in the implementation section of the report and the Commission urges the Board of Trustees to support that plan.

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John T. McCuen, Chairman

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS ACCOMPANYING THE PRESENTATION OF THE REPORT OF THE COMMISSION ON ACADEMIC STANDARDS TO THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE LACCD

John T. McCuen
October 13, 1978

The Report of the Commission on Academic Standards has been discussed in Board meetings recently and we have now provided copies to you. The Report has also been distributed to the Commission members and others at the Colleges and will be disseminated widely so that we can profit from the ideas and suggestions of faculty, students, administrators, as well as the Board.

I will not take your time today to give a review of the history and development of the Commission, because that is provided in the introduction of the Report. I would like to ask that you read the Report, reflect on it, and let us know your reactions. I would also like to make some clarifications as I am presenting the report to you:

(1) I participated in the work of the Commission as its chairman, not as the Vice-Chancellor of Educational Planning and Development. Problems and issues were analyzed and recommendations formulated by the members of the District Commission, using the work of the college committees on academic standards as a basis.

(2) As is stated in the introduction of the Report, the Commission felt that its work was "complicated by the lack of a clear, current District-wide mission statement" (pg. 2).

(3) The work of the Commission has taken a long time, because the scope of the assignment was immense. And a considerable amount of work remains to be done. Again, quoting from the introduction, "Because the problems discussed by the Commission are so broad and so vital to our colleges, many of the recommendations call for further study and debate by other groups. In fact, the recommendations made in the Report should be viewed as issues for debate, not as stone tablets from an all-knowing Commission" (pg. 3). Because of the scope and the complexity of the Commission's task, it was impossible to collect empirical data to support all conclusions. The Report contains many judgments which may or may not be supported by objective observation.

(4) While a majority of the Commission supported the Report, I would call your attention to the fact that two members have submitted "Minority Reports" and these have been included in this document. These "Minority Reports" represent important points of view and should be read along with the full Report of the Commission.

(5) The Commission asserted its commitment to the preservation of "the final authority of the classroom teacher" and of "campus autonomy." Still, a great many of the recommendations seem to me to imply a

considerable amount of centralization and standardization on the District level. I would maintain that as long as the instructor is an autonomous professional and as long as colleges are educational institutions with separate accreditations, then many of the issues and problems dealt with in the Report must continue to be matters that are decided at the level of the classroom and the campus.

As a matter of fact, members of the Commission and other faculty members have indicated to me that the work of the Commission, especially the focus on standards it has brought about, has already begun to have its effect. The faculty and the colleges have not waited for a District-wide implementation of the recommendations in order to begin working at the classroom and campus level on the issues raised in the Report.

The implementation section of the Academic Standards Report recommends that a District Standards Committee be established. This committee would be empowered to establish other committees and to develop methods of implementing the recommendations in the Report. But I do not believe that such a committee will be able to make firm recommendations, any more than the Academic Standards Commission was able to, without "a clear, current District-wide mission statement."

I would like to discuss more fully what we are referring to as a "mission statement." Such a statement is often similar to what our Board Rules call the "educational philosophy." And let me read to you this brief paragraph from Board Rule 1200:

> EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY: It is the conviction of the Los Angeles Community Colleges that each individual should have the opportunity to develop to his/her greatest potential. To that end, it is the function of the colleges to provide for the members of the community learning experiences which will assist them to live effectively as workers, family members, and citizens.

The educational philosophy is followed by brief descriptions of the community college functions: occupational, transfer, general education, guidance, community services, and continuing education.

As you can see, this is a statement of philosophy and functions with which we can generally agree. The problem is that when it comes to making the hard decisions concerning academic standards, and planning for the future of this District, such overly general statements do not give much guidance.

Consequently, before moving further with the work of the Commission on Academic Standards, I am recommending that we develop a brief, three or four-page "Statement of Mission and Functions" of the Los Angeles Community College District. This document will state general principles that can be applied directly to the practical problems that confront the Board and the entire District on matters such as academic standards and the annual budget. I think some of the problems the Board had to face in adopting the current budget would be easier to face in the future if we had such a Mission and Functions statement.

I realize that we do not have the luxury of a long period of time to develop this "Statement of Mission and Functions." We will need to make use of it in the near future, as we begin to implement the Standards Commission recommendations and as we begin to prepare our budget for 1979-80. Therefore, I would like to establish, through the proper channels, a committee of faculty and administrators to draft a recommended statement that the Board could have for discussion as soon as January, 1979.

The membership will be representative of the faculty and administration of the District. The committee will analyze the educational mission and functions of this District and will develop a statement that can be used as a basis for the establishment of academic standards and budgeting priorities.

I know that this is a brief period of time to develop such a basic and significant document, but I believe the task can be accomplished. I have already set the staff of our newly-formed Office of Educational Planning to work developing background information and collecting samples of such statements from other colleges. And rather than have brief and infrequent meetings, the committee will schedule an all-day workshop, at which the major portion of the work can be accomplished. This committee will also have at its disposal the work of a previous District-wide master planning committee that worked over two years with the colleges and the community.

Our District is not alone in pursuing such endeavors. The Board of Governors, for instance, is currently considering a statement on standards. In addition, what the State Chancellor's Office has designated as a "Finance Project" is in reality giving consideration to many of the same matters as we are working on at the local level. A large section of this latter report is entitled "Mission and Function," and many of the issues discussed in other sections of the report are similar to the concerns of the committee I am proposing. I would like our work on mission and standards to move along in such a way that we can influence the State effort in both areas.

In conclusion, I wish to express my appreciation to the members of the college committees and the District Commission who have worked so hard and so diligently on the Standards Report. No one individual on the Commission supports every item in the Report. It is a tribute to these ladies and gentlemen that a report in this complex area was even completed. They have provided us with a solid foundation. But we have now come to the point where we need to take a new look at, and to reformulate, our mission and our functions in light of the new circumstances which confront our District.

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INTRODUCTION

On September 1, 1976, the Board of Trustees of the Los Angeles Community College District adopted the following motion:

> That the Board implement the Chancellor's suggestion to establish a Commission on Academic Standards and that a report be forthcoming not only on academic but also vocational standards of the District and the report made available to the Board at the earliest possible time.

The reasons for this motion are generally well known. For the past several years, many organizations and individuals have expressed concern about the state of academic standards in the schools and colleges throughout the nation. The possible causes for this condition are numerous and it is not the purpose of this report to dwell upon them. These alleged causes have been dealt with in a comprehensive fashion in other publications, of which representative examples were available for study by members of the Commission on Academic Standards (see bibliography). Suffice it to say that the condition is a real and serious one that needs careful attention by the academic community. This is why the Board took the action that it did and this is why the Commission formed by that action has been working diligently during the past several months.

Shortly after the Board action, the process of selecting the Commission members began. The District administration, in consultation with the District faculty leadership, decided to include faculty members representing various academic and service areas, faculty members representing District faculty organizations, administrators, and representatives from educational agencies other than the Los Angeles Community College District. The complete membership roster can be found in Appendix A.

COMMISSION PROCEDURE

It became clear during the first two meetings of the Commission that the scope of the charge from the Board almost defied delimitation. Consequently, the major effort during these early meetings was to outline clearly a manageable task that could be completed within approximately one year--the time within which the Commission determined it should complete its work and sumbit its report to the Board of Trustees. The problem of task definition was further complicated by the lack of a clear, current District-wide mission statement.

With these constraints in mind, the Commission decided that the most manageable approach would be to examine current policies and practices in the District which relate to standards.

After an examination of catalogs from the respective colleges within the District, two findings were quite apparent. First, certain discrepancies existed between District colleges in published policies relating to academic standards; and second, such policy statements have a serious impact on the student when he enters, while he is attending, and when he leaves. Based on these preliminary findings, a consensus was reached to divide the Commission into three subcommittees. The specific areas of responsibility assigned to the respective subcommittees were: (1) standards policies affecting entering students; (2) standards policies affecting students in attendance; and (3) standards policies affecting exiting students. Subsequently, to aid in the study, the Commission contacted each college within the District and requested that a campus committee on academic standards be formed if such a committee was not already in operation. The composition of such committees was to be jointly determined by representatives of the administration and the faculty.

When each college identified a chairperson for its committee on academic standards, the Commission called the chairpersons together for a joint meeting. Each campus committee was asked to study the standards policies in the three areas mentioned above and to examine the relationship between the standards <u>practices</u> on the campus and the <u>published</u> standards statements and submit reports to the Commission. When this information was received, each of the Commission subcommittees prepared a report with recommendations to the full Commission on Academic Standards.

Finally, the Commission made an effort to synthesize and evaluate these reports and what is presented here is a result of that effort. Because the problems discussed by the Commission are so broad and so vital to our colleges, many of the recommendations call for further study and debate by other groups. In fact, the recommendations made in the report should be viewed as issues for debate, not as stone tablets from an all-knowing Commission. The members of the Commission hope that at the very least this effort has put the issues related to academic standards in clearer focus and created a renewed, continuing interest in the matter at each

college. No one on the Commission would have put everything in the report in the form it takes here. Two of the Commission members felt strongly enough about their dissenting views that they have submitted "Minority Reports," which have been included as Section VI. These two reports represent important points of view and should be read along with the Report of the Commission, in order to gain a complete perspective on the issues that were of concern to the Commission.

By its very nature this report is a critical examination of current academic practices in the District. Consequently, taken out of the larger District context, it also might appear negative. The Commission therefore believes it is important to mention here some positive factors. First, while the District along with other postsecondary institutions has concerns about academic standards that need attention, the nine colleges continue to have more than their fair share of excellent faculty producing excellent students. In fact, in the final analysis, the critical solution to the problems will depend on the personal academic standards each faculty member sets for himself. Second, the very fact that this District has addressed the difficult standards issues in an open, direct manner is in itself a positive sign.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Findings

In general, the findings of the Commission on Academic Standards are that:

1. Statistical evidence and non-statistical observation indicate that academic standards in the Los Angeles Community College District have followed national trends; that is, grade point averages have gone up as academic performance levels have gone down.

2. All of the most frequently cited causes for declining standards probably obtain in Los Angeles. Among them are the following:

   a. failure to acquire basic skills in secondary school
   b. enrollment in college of many who traditionally would not have enrolled
   c. student expectation that enrollment means course credit regardless of performance or attendance
   d. conflicting schedules of employment and family responsibilities
   e. proliferation of courses that meet graduation requirements
   f. lowering of standards by some instructors
   g. rejection of traditional standards by some instructors
   h. the Vietnam War
   i. national political unrest
   j. television

3. The classroom teachers of the District are distressed by lowered performances but continue to award higher grades; campus surveys show that faculty most often cite District emphasis on retention at the expense of standards, promotion of programs of dubious value, and lack of adequate testing and guidance as the chief causes of the problem.

4. There are differences between stated policies and practices at the colleges and variations from college to college on many matters concerning academic standards.

5. Some practices are detrimental to students who receive grades they have not earned or fail classes they should not have taken, demoralizing to faculty who are expected to retain students who cannot, or do not, perform, and damaging to the educational process which cannot maintain teaching and learning as primary.

These findings are detailed in the many studies and in the campus reports referred to in the introduction. Those materials--too voluminous for inclusion in this report--are on file in the Office of Educational Planning and Development. A selected bibliography is included.

To indicate the range of campus concerns and responses, a few excerpts from the campus reports are included in Appendix B.

Recommendations

Recommendations are as specific as the Commission could make them. In general, they call for:

1. individual and institutional commitment to academic excellence

2. continued study of academic standards in terms of District programs and in terms of current national reappraisals of what a college education is or should be

3. emphases and actions that stress college programs for college students no matter what other community needs we serve

4. adequate testing at entrance to identify those who need remedial work and development of a more comprehensive and flexible remedial program to meet those needs

5. adequate guidance so that students take appropriate classes in the most advantageous sequence

6. increased attempts to identify and assist potential drop-outs

7. development of consensus statements of standards for all courses

8. reappraisal--and perhaps redesignation--of each piece of paper (transcripts, certificates, diplomas) issued by the colleges so that any record of completion shall have value and meaning

9. adequate information to all students of all policies and practices

In addition, the development of a committee structure utilizing faculty representation in the implementation of these recommendations is suggested and discussed in the body of the report.

Reservations

The Commission has three reservations which it asks the reader to keep in mind:

1. Items are listed separately, but they are, in effect, closely related parts of the unified attack on the problem.

2. Nothing in this report is meant to remove grading from the final authority of the classroom teacher.

3. None of the recommendations for District-wide standardization should be construed as a proposal for lessening campus autonomy; the Commission holds that each college should control the ways and means in which and by which it serves its community.

In the interest of brevity, a skeletal structure is used for the body of the report. Listed are problems, issues to which those problems give rise, and recommendations for action.

PROBLEMS, ISSUES, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

I. ENTERING STUDENTS

A. PRE-ENROLLMENT

1. Problem

College promotional literature stresses fun courses, personal satisfaction, and enjoyment, but not academic requirements; students are, therefore, ill-prepared for learning requirements, and their confusion, resistance, or absence adversely affects classes.

2. Issues

a. Should we recruit at all?

b. Should we advertise academic programs?

3. Recommendations

a. That promotional literature stress the word college and indicate that knowledge and skills are taught and tested.

b. That articulation between colleges and high schools be improved so that prospective students may know exactly what we offer and what we expect. (See IV C2.)

B. ADMISSION POLICIES

1. Problem

Admission procedures differ from campus to campus and from stated policy to practice, creating confusion and the assumption that catalog statements may generally be ignored.

2. Issues

a. Shall there be a uniform District procedure for admission?

b. If so, how shall present differences be reconciled?

c. How can policies and practices be made consistent?

3. Recommendations

That procedures by which one becomes a student in a college in

this District:

a. be developed for recommendation to the Board of Trustees by administration in conjunction with the District Senate in terms of other recommendations in this report

b. be made to appear in all college catalogs

c. be uniformly practiced throughout the District

d. be used only for admission to a college and not for acceptance or rejection for any degree or certificate program such as nursing or fire science

C. LATE REGISTRATION

1. Problem

Students who register late cause three problems:

a. They interrupt at the beginning of class hours (or during class) seeking admission.

b. If admitted, they frequently never catch up or hold back the rest of the class--or both.

c. If they gain admission to classes that had been closed, they--and others--learn the value of registering late, thereby causing increased late registration.

2. Issues

a. Shall late registration continue to be encouraged?

b. Shall late registration be permitted?

c. Shall late registration be permitted in certain circumstances?

3. Recommendations

a. That registration for regular, full-semester classes be permitted after the first class meeting only under strictly limited conditions established by Deans of Admissions and the District Senate and uniformly controlled by Deans of Admissions.

b. That registration for other classes be accomplished in any appropriate way that does not interfere or conflict with regular enrollment.

c. That college administrators, the Faculty Senates, and the District Senate examine registration policies and practices in light of changing enrollment and scheduling patterns.

D. CHOICE OF COURSES AND PROGRAMS

1. Problem

Students all too often enroll in classes without knowing course content or purpose, without knowing applicability of courses to degree or certification requirements, or without knowing whether their preparation assures a fair chance of success.

a. The problem is caused by:

(1) failure to consult catalogs and schedules of classes

(2) failure to see a counselor or instructor-advisor

(3) ignoring of advice given

(4) too few counselors

(5) inexperienced student counseling aides

(6) having no test scores or transcripts available for advisement

(7) failure to use test scores or transcripts for advisement

(8) inconsistency of procedures

b. The problem results in:

(1) failure of students

(2) dissatisfaction of students

(3) high drop rates

(4) loss of two to four weeks of instruction in English classes while students are moved from one class to another

(5) discouragement of properly placed English students who must wait

(6) difficulty in balancing English course offerings

(7) avoiding or postponing of English courses by those who most need them

(8) similar problems for mathematics

(9) failure of students to recognize that lack of basic skills affects all aspects of education

(10) expectation by students that none shall fail

(11) lowering of academic standards

(12) demoralization of instructors who must contend with all those problems and with pressures to retain enrollment and maintain WSCH

(13) serious loss of learning for those students who want and were prepared to gain college educations

2. Issues

a. Shall transcripts of previous work--high school and college--be required of all students? Of new students only? Of transfer students? Of foreign students?

b. Shall transcripts be required before admission? Before enrolling a second semester?

c. Shall some form of entrance or placement examination be required of all applicants? Of full-time students only? Of new students only? Of only entering students with less than 2.0 GPA from high school or other college? Of foreign students?

d. Shall such examination test all basic skills? Reading only? Writing only? Mathematics only?

e. Shall such examination be recommended but not required?

f. Shall results of such examinations be made available to counselors? To instructors? To students? Automatically? On request? In what form?

g. Shall every student taking such examinations receive interpretation of the results?

h. Shall placement in classes be based on such examinations (or)

i. Shall students who score at certain levels be required to enroll in remedial courses?

j. Shall students be required to complete remedial courses before enrolling in regular courses?

k. Shall students be required to see a counselor or instructor-advisor before enrollment? Before enrollment for the second semester? Individually? In groups?

l. Shall program approval by counselor or instructor-advisor or departmental advisor be required?

m. Shall such counseling or advisement be recommended but not required?

n. Shall students entering with less than 2.0 GPA from high school or another college be admitted provisionally, that is restricted in number or kinds of courses taken?

3. Recommendations

a. That the District and all colleges require submission of transcripts of high school and other college work as a pre-condition for enrollment except that a student may enroll for one semester while transcripts are being received or an applicant who can show cause for not submitting a transcript may petition for exemption.

b. That all new students who declare themselves candidates for transfer, degrees, or occupational certificates be assigned to an instructor or instructor-advisor who shall guide students through programs until completion and who shall approve student's schedules each semester.

c. That all other new students be given an appointment with an instructor-advisor or counselor who shall familiarize the student with the requirements of the college and shall stress the importance of academic advisement throughout students' college careers; further

(1) A sufficient number of instructors from various departments be reassigned on a part-time basis and given in-service training to provide program advisement for all candidates.

(2) Each college seek to identify students without program objectives.

(3) Those who have specific purposes other than qualifying for transfer, degrees, or certificates (such as job advancement or updating of skills) be permitted (and encouraged) to enroll in classes as they choose.

(4) Those who have no specific purpose be offered additional academic, career, and personal counseling.

d. That District-wide placement examinations in English written composition, English reading comprehension, and computational skills be given to all candidates for transfer or degrees.

e. That the specific diagnostic tests to be used and the interpretations of the tests for purposes of placement be determined by District-wide committees composed of teaching faculty experts in reading comprehension, English composition, and mathematical skills; that those committees, counselors, and administrators in conjunction with the District Senate establish procedures for administering, scoring, and interpreting tests; and that the District provide budget and staff assistance to develop and operate the testing program.

f. That the results of the examinations be interpreted for the students and made available to counselors, instructor-advisors, and concerned classroom instructors (but not recorded on students' permanent records) so that students may begin college in courses which offer the greatest chances of success.

g. That all candidates for transfer, degrees or occupational certificates, including foreign students, who demonstrate need for remediation in basic skills be required to enroll in and complete appropriate remedial courses before enrolling in regular courses requiring those skills. (See II F 3c.)

h. That class size of remedial courses be sharply limited and that alternative approaches to remediation (such as that offered by John E. Rouche in Time as the Variable, Achievement as the Constant: Competency-Based Instruction in the Community College) be considered.

i. That the District computer services provide a program for determining which students have completed the stated requirements and for identifying those students who have not completed the requirements.

j. That procedures be established to assure that the requirements are met.

k. That the requirements and procedures be uniformly enforced at all colleges.

II. ATTENDING STUDENTS

A. CLASS SCHEDULES

1. Problem

Departments develop schedules to provide a full range of offerings but must also consider room availability, room utilization, and WSCH; students avoid afternoon classes; administrations cancel some but not all low-enrollment classes, resulting in:

a. inability of students to complete programs

b. inability of departments to develop or maintain special and advanced offerings

c. inability of departments to develop more flexible schedules--especially of late afternoon classes

d. lowering of standards by instructors who fear class cancellation

2. Issue

Shall we schedule classes for educational reasons, or shall we schedule for highest enrollment?

3. Recommendations

a. That, consistent with other recommendations in this report, departments and disciplines review the sequence and frequency of course offerings.

b. That, consistent with the contract, departments and disciplines avoid scheduling high-enrollment (frequently grade-inflating) classes at the expense of scheduling classes required for degrees and certificates.

c. That colleges review policies for canceling classes.

d. That priority for enrollment be based on units completed.

B. PROGRAM ADJUSTMENT AND WITHDRAWAL FROM CLASSES

1. Problem

Present practices are costly and not educationally productive because:

a. Some colleges report that almost half of all students make at least one change of program and that adds, drops, and transfers may number in tens of thousands each semester.

b. Students enroll in courses for which they have neither interest nor need merely to complete the registration process; classes are therefore closed to students who do want them; the number of "no shows" at the beginning of each semester increases; and the student population of whole classes frequently turns over in the first few weeks of the semester.

c. Students drop courses in which they are receiving average or below-average grades at the beginning of a course instead of taking steps to master the course content and to learn that, through effort, one may master a difficult skill or body of knowledge.

d. Students repeatedly drop and re-enroll in courses until they find one at the most pleasing hour, at the most pleasing location, with the most entertaining instructor, or with the instructor likely to offer the most pleasing grade--whether tied to achievement or not.

e. Students often postpone English until the last semester while demonstrating in other courses the need for compositional and rhetorical skills.

f. Withdrawal dates are so late and practices so inconsistent that students need develop no responsibility for keeping up with courses.

2. Issues

a. Shall the college establish and enforce means for getting students into the right classes and keeping them there?

b. Shall withdrawal be made a less readily available option?

c. Shall excessive withdrawals be penalized?

3. Recommendations

a. That greater efforts be made to counsel students into appropriate classes. (See recommendations under I D, Choice of Courses and Programs, and II H, Counseling.)

b. That current efforts to establish open-entry/open-exit classes be encouraged, especially in basic skills courses.

c. That withdrawal dates be earlier and more definite.

d. That use of W as an alternative to the F grade be stopped.

e. That students whose units of W, NC, and INC exceed the number of units completed be placed on academic probation. (See II G.)

f. That the withdrawal policy be District-wide and regularly and consistently enforced.

g. That the policy be clearly communicated to students.

C. CLASS ATTENDANCE

1. Problem

Students seem to need no excuse for absences and seem to expect that absence is excuse for missed work; instructors--under pressure to retain students--cater to absentees at a high cost to academic standards.

2. Issues

a. Shall emphasis on retention be decreased?

b. Shall there be further rules concerning attendance?

c. Shall efforts be made to discount attendance altogether?

3. Recommendations

a. That District-wide attendance policies be regularly communicated to students.

b. That the District, colleges and faculty undertake an educational program to teach students their responsibility for attendance.

c. That departments (or instructors) publish particular attendance regulations as part of course requirements.

d. That instructors exercise current District policy of dropping students when absences equal hours class meets per week, or assign student the grade earned.

D. CLASS REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING STANDARDS

1. Problem

The twin problems--declining ability and grade inflation--are confirmed by many studies and by personal observation of our faculty, but instructors are caught between the need to maintain a certain level WSCH and the students' expectation of higher grades for lower achievement; the results are compromised standards and more shopping by students.

2. Issue

What can be done by and for the classroom instructor to assure that all credit courses meet acceptable academic standards?

3. Recommendations

a. That the District establish and fund District-wide discipline committees which shall establish broad guidelines for minimum standards, and which committees shall consider all related professional and academic standards including the proficiency tests being adopted by other institutions.

b. That administration in conjunction with the District Senate develop a District grading policy based on discipline guidelines, which policy shall be published in college catalogs followed by a grade description such as the following developed at Pierce College:

A - Excellent - outstanding achievement of the course objectives.

B - Very good - above average achievement of the course objectives. The quality of work demonstrates a comprehensive knowledge of the subject matter and a marked ability to interpret it.

C - Acceptable - satisfactory or average achievement of the course objectives. The performance fulfills the course requirements in both quality and quantity, and meets acceptable standards for graduation.

D - Barely passing - achievement below the course objectives yet the achievement represents sufficient fulfillment of the objectives so that it is not necessary to repeat the course. The level of achievement is not generally satisfactory for advancement in studies in the same or related areas.

F - Failure to achieve objectives of the course. The performance is undeserving of course credit.

CR - (Credit) Satisfactory achievement of course objectives. See District Administrative Regulations, E3 for college policy. (Not used in grade point calculations.)

INC - (Incomplete) A major portion of the course objectives have been completed in a satisfactory manner while some one or more requirements have not been completed. (Not used in grade point calculations.)

c. That each department use those guidelines for establishing more specific standards and for publishing a departmental grading policy. (See Appendix D for sample departmental statements.)

d. That each instructor distribute that policy to all students along with a statement of requirements for each class.

e. That the department regularly receive and discuss with individual instructors each instructor's grade distribution and grade changes compared with departmental averages.

f. That all references to W as a "grade" be eliminated.

g. That the State regulation requiring a letter grade after the second census week be clearly communicated to all faculty and students.

h. That District statistical studies concerning grading and related matters be made available to the District Senate and to local senates, and that those bodies establish continuing committees on academic standards.

E. GRADE FORGIVENESS AND CHANGES OF GRADES

1. Problem

In the process of making it possible for students to have a second academic chance, we may have created a mechanism for grade inflation and student expectation that academic deficiencies do not matter.

2. Issue

Shall we place limitations on grade forgiveness and grade changes?

3. Recommendations

a. That the current practices concerning grade forgiveness and changes be closely examined and compared with other community colleges and with transfer institutions.

b. That a District policy concerning grade forgiveness or academic renewal be developed in accordance with Title 5 of the California Administrative Code.

F. COURSE CREDIT

1. Problem

College credit is now awarded not only for courses taught in classrooms but also for taking examinations, work experience, television courses, personal counseling sessions, and other activities which affect grades and academic standards.

2. Issue

What shall we allow as unit credit for transfer, degrees, and occupational certificates?

3. Recommendations

a. That all college level courses receiving unit credit contain a body of knowledge or skills or both that are measured according to standards called for in section II D.

b. That the maximum number or units of credit by examination be twelve; that District-wide discipline committees be established to determine which courses may be so taken and what standards must be met; and that the practices be uniform throughout the District.

c. That a new designation be established to indicate credit for progress achieved in remedial courses by students who are still not ready to advance to a higher level course; that students be allowed to repeat such courses as often as necessary; or that fractional credit be established for modularized courses.

d. That co-operative education courses be graded CR/NC.

e. That no personal development "courses" be offered for unit credit.

G. ACADEMIC PROBATION AND DISQUALIFICATION

1. Problem

Board rules concerning probation and disqualification are not being uniformly applied.

2. Issue

Shall we enforce Board rules 8200, 8201, and 8202? (See Appendix C.)

3. Recommendations

a. That all colleges uniformly and evenly enforce Board rules 8200, 8201, and 8202.

b. That students on probation be required to have regular conferences with counselors or faculty advisors.

H. COUNSELING

1. Problems

a. The District has one of the poorest counselor-student ratios in the state.

b. Many counselors are now preparing for and directing personal development courses offered for unit credit, thereby decreasing further the number of counseling hours available for academic counseling.

c. Confusions and conflicts arise concerning academic standards when personal development classes for unit credit are offered.

2. Issues

a. Shall we commit the resources needed to provide adequate academic advisement?

b. Shall the emphasis of counseling departments be academic guidance or psychological counseling?

3. Recommendations

a. That we provide students with instructor-advisors as indicated in I D3b and D3c.

b. That we hire additional counselors whose interests and training prepare them to help students avoid and solve academic problems.

c. That we provide sufficient group psychological counseling and academic and career counseling.

d. That counselors administer and interpret placement tests.

I. STUDENT SERVICES

1. Problem

Students who might succeed academically often do not because of lack of help or lack of knowledge that help is available.

2. Issue

How can we make better use of learning centers, tutoring, and other services?

3. Recommendations

a. That instructors, counselors, and instructor-advisors make direct referrals of students with problems to the appropriate person or office and follow-up be made of all referrals.

b. That, in cooperation with the library staff, instructors in general, and English instructors in particular, assume responsibility for introducing students to the uses of the library

as a depository of knowledge and teaching them to use the library to advance their education on the campus and in their future lives.

III. LEAVING STUDENTS

A. DESIGNATIONS FOR TRANSFER, DEGREES, AND OCCUPATIONAL CERTIFICATES

1. Problem

Recent criticism of community college requirements for completion of programs (among the most recent: Gustavo A. Lellender. "Community Colleges Must Abolish Tinsel Diplomas," The Chronicle of Higher Education, November 28, 1977, p. 15.) indicates the need for changes in the requirements, the programs, or both.

2. Issues

a. Is strengthening of transfer, degree, and occupational programs adequate to overcome the criticism?

b. Do we need other programs with different requirements and different names?

3. Recommendations

a. That the District assume leadership in developing a meaningful multiple degree or certificate system so that our comprehensive offerings will meet the needs of the many without compromising quality in the attempt to be all things to all people.

b. That the District assure that whatever piece of paper we issue for completion of any program shall have value and meaning.

c. That the District study and be prepared to adopt proficiency examinations if their effectiveness is demonstrated in other institutions. (See II D3a.)

d. That for the immediate present we strengthen current programs.

B. DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

1. Problems

a. There is no clear District statement of what an A.A. or A.S. degree should signify: whether it should mean mastery of a body of general knowledge, mastery of communicational and computational skills, mastery of some level of occupational skills, or something else.

b. There are so many variations and options that degree requirements may be met by completing almost any collection of sixty units.

2. Issues

a. Should associate degrees signify some definite level of competence or certain breadth of instruction?

b. Should associate degrees signify preparation for the third year of college, including all general education and breadth requirements.

c. Should any course in the catalogs count toward graduation including remedial courses and courses marked PD, (Prerequisite - Developmental), O (Occupational) and B (Baccalaureate).

d. Should any changes made in degree requirements for liberal arts and science degrees also affect vocational degrees?

3. Recommendations

a. That District-wide discipline committees determine the minimum requirements for a degree in a major.

b. That the District Senate, the bargaining agent, and administration form a committee to establish minimum requirements for the liberal arts degree.

c. That the District Senate, the bargaining agent, and administration form a committee to study general education requirements for both degree and transfer programs, and that the committee examine applicable District and State regulations and the literature of the current debate within the District and throughout the nation concerning general studies, breadth requirements, distribution requirements, basic skills, and core curricula.

d. That the general education units required for the associate degrees be increased from the present level to 32 units and in the pattern shown, and that individual campus Academic Standards Committees insure that such courses are comparable in quality to those offered at four-year institutions.

	Units
(1) Natural Sciences: courses from at least two disciplines including one laboratory	6
(2) Social Sciences: courses from at least two disciplines including at least one course dealing with federal, state, and local government	9
(3) Humanities: courses from at least two disciplines	6

	Units
(4) Basic Skills: one course from each of these categories:	9
(a) Written Communication: English 1	
(b) Oral Communication: Speech 1, 2, 3, 4, 9 11, 12, 13, 15, 16, 85; Theater Arts 10	
(c) Mathematical Skills: Math, 3, 4, 7, 8, 11, 14, 20, 35; Philosphy 8, 9; Statistics 1	
(d) One course in baccalaureate level health education or 2 units of P.E. activity	2
TOTAL UNITS	32

e. That remedial courses and courses labeled PD not meet elective or general education requirements for degrees.

f. That all degrees specify major.

g. That vocational degree requirements be considered separately from liberal arts, science, and general studies degrees.

h. That individual colleges be encouraged to develop whatever programs meet community needs and with appropriate variations as long as minimum requirements are met.

C. TRANSFER REQUIREMENTS

1. Problems

a. There is question whether our requirements meet Title 5 requirements, with markedly different answers from the colleges.

b. There have been objections from CSUC schools and from students that our requirements are not adequate either for general education or preparation for major.

2. Issue

How can we assure that our students can compete with students from other colleges?

3. Recommendations

a. That the applicable recommendations listed above for associate degrees apply also to transfer requirements, particularly those concerning general education.

b. That administration clarify Title 5 requirements.

c. That codes used to designate the transferability or non-transferability of courses be carefully defined in college catalogs.

d. That the terms general education, vocational, and occupational education be clearly defined in catalogs.

e. That policies regarding grading systems, grade changes, and challenging courses by examination be standardized.

f. That the currently functioning District curriculum committee be reorganized so that the majority of membership is limited to teaching faculty of the District selected by campus Faculty Senates and bargaining agents.

g. That that committee establish what is meant by baccalaureate level courses in terms of the five principles stipulated by the Transfer Credit Review Board (TCRB).

h. That that committee also develop the criteria necessary to define general education courses.

i. That the progress of transfer students be followed on a continuing basis to determine effectiveness of course preparations at the various campuses of the District.

j. That these recommendations be adopted District-wide.

D. OCCUPATIONAL CERTIFICATE REQUIREMENTS

1. Problem

Programs and requirements vary from college to college and are subject to frequent change.

2. Issue

Has the occupational certificate sufficient meaning to merit continued attention?

3. Recommendations

a. That District-wide discipline committees establish specific requirements for certificate programs.

b. That college catalogs specify step-by-step procedures for obtaining certificates.

c. That each college catalog list occupational programs which it does not offer but which are offered by other colleges in the District.

d. That counseling services be improved for occupational students planning transfer to four-year institutions.

e. That these recommendations be adopted District-wide.

E. ATTRITION AMONG STUDENTS NOT COMPLETING PROGRAMS

1. Problem

There is a tendency to lower academic standards for marginal students.

2. Issue

What can and should be done--other than lowering standards--for those who do not succeed in college?

3. Recommendations

a. That the colleges intensify their efforts to identify drop-outs and potential drop-outs and their needs and problems.

b. That the colleges intensify their efforts to assist such individuals to meet academic standards so that they may remain in college.

c. That we recognize that if we maintain standards, not all students will be able to meet those standards.

d. That we seek means by which those who cannot or do not meet academic standards can leave our colleges with dignity.

e. That follow-up studies be made to learn causes for attrition.

IV. ESTABLISHING AND MAINTAINING STANDARDS

A. Problem

The recommendations in this report--no matter how valid, no matter how well-supported by the findings of the commission, no matter how desirable--are subject to the same compromise, dilution, and neglect that produced the ills these recommendations are proposed to remedy unless all those responsible make commitments and take action.

B. Issues

1. Shall we commit ourselves to maintaining academic standards?

2. Shall we act on that commitment?

C. Recommendations

1. That the Chancellor present this report to the Board of Trustees and call upon the Board to support the sense of this report and direct his staff to coordinate implementation of commission recommendations and to provide adequate budget and facilities therefore.

2. That the District take full advantage of offers for continued cooperation from commission members representing the Los Angeles Unified School District and the California State Universities. (See letters from Richard H. Lawrence, Assistant Superintendent, Division of Educational Support Services, Los Angeles Unified School District, and John A. Palmer, Vice President for Academic Affairs, California State University, Los Angeles, on file in the Office of Educational Planning and Development.)

3. That the colleges stress the value of programs that meet standards and commit themselves to consistency in carrying out uniform policies.

4. That disciplines and departments establish and maintain entry level requirements, course requirements, program completion requirements, and uniform grading standards.

5. That instructors inform students of standards expected in each course and teach and grade accordingly--without pressures to maintain WSCH.

6. That disciplines, departments, and teachers re-commit themselves to quality instruction as the highest priority of the profession.

7. That counselors concentrate their efforts on getting students into satisfactory and appropriate transfer, degree, or certificate programs and on helping students complete those programs.

8. That students be fully informed of requirements and standards and know that they must meet those standards and requirements at any college in the Los Angeles Community College District.

V. IMPLEMENTATION

The recommendations of the District Commission on Academic Standards are made with a strong conviction that implementation of those recommendations is essential and desirable for meeting popular charges of declining standards and for assuring academic excellence in the Los Angeles Community College District.

Those recommendations, which affect everyone in the District, call for many actions by many segments of the District. To avoid confusion, inaction, and cosmetic applications, it is necessary that one group direct and coordinate all actions.

It is, therefore, proposed that the District Senate, the bargaining agent, and the District Office of Educational Planning and Development establish a District Standards Committee which would be empowered to establish other committees and charge that they effect the recommendations in this report.

Such a committee would initiate, coordinate, and evaluate all actions of all other committees. A possible committee structure and suggested actions to be taken are indicated below.

A. Standing District-wide discipline committees could:

1. Meet as necessary to initiate actions below and monthly thereafter.

2. Set standards and requirements for all courses--entry level to advanced--in each discipline.

3. Determine requirements for completing a major in each discipline for transfer, degree, or occupational certificate.

4. Determine which courses may be offered for credit/no credit.

5. Determine which courses may be offered for credit by examination.

6. Determine whether any ITV or co-operative education courses may be offered for credit in any discipline.

7. Determine whether personal development courses taught by counselors infringe on departmental offerings or may affect enrollment in departmental offerings.

8. Establish inter-disciplinary sub-committees to deal with any matters that affect more than one discipline.

9. Establish District-wide basic skills committees from faculty in English reading, English composition, and mathematics to:

   a. select or develop appropriate placement tests

   b. develop--with committees B, C, and D--procedures for administering, scoring, and interpreting placement tests

   c. develop procedures for assuring that all students who need remedial instruction are enrolled in appropriate classes

   d. develop means of assuring that students are prepared to go from remedial to regular classes

e. develop a designation for progress by students who complete remedial courses but who are not prepared to go to regular classes

10. Communicate all decisions to all other discipline committees and to all departments within each discipline, allowing a reasonable time response before taking final action on decisions.

11. Consider any other matter affecting the discipline.

B. A standing committee jointly established by the District Senate, the bargaining agent, and Deans of Instruction could:

1. Assure that college Faculty Senates and Administrations establish standing curriculum and academic standards committees on all campuses.

2. Establish a communication system among the campus committees and between the campus committees and the District committees.

3. Establish a general grading policy (based on work of discipline committees).

4. Draft a policy on grade forgiveness and change of grade (or call upon committee C to do so).

5. Enforce Board rules on academic probation and dismissal.

6. Enforce recommended changes to transfer, degree, and occupational certificate requirements.

7. Develop--through the Chancellor's office--accurate and appropriate designations for degrees and certificates (based on work of discipline committees).

8. Draft single District statement of requirements for transfer, degrees, and certificates (based on work of District discipline committees and campus curriculum and standards committees).

9. Include new policies and procedures in catalogs.

10. Publicize new policies and procedures.

C. A standing committee jointly established by the District Senate, the bargaining agent, and the Deans of Admission could:

1. Draft a District-wide admissions policy dealing with applications, transcripts, registration, program changes, and related matters.

2. Include a policy statement in catalogs.

3. Publicize any new provisions or procedures.

4. Assure that policy is uniformly enforced in all colleges.

D. Committee C in conjunction with counseling departments could:

1. Recruit, train, and supervise a cadre of instructors and/or instructor-advisors--to be compensated at standard rates.

2. Establish a system for directing students who declare candidacy for transfer, degrees, or certificates to appropriate instructor-advisors.

3. Establish a system for approving programs for non-candidates who wish to enroll in specific courses for specific purposes.

4. Establish a system for assuring that all others receive academic and career counseling.

5. Establish a system for directing students with academic problems to appropriate person or place for help.

E. Departments and instructors could:

1. Develop local grading standards based on statements of discipline committees and committee B.

2. Send copies of those standards to discipline committees and to committee B.

3. Inform all students in all classes of applicable standards.

4. Review standards and grading practices periodically and support each other in maintaining appropriate standards.

F. College administrations could:

1. Provide meeting places and other facilities or services as needed.

2. Send regularly to department chairmen grade distributions by department and by instructors.

G. The District Office of Educational Planning and Development could:

1. Provide the District Senate and local senates with studies, reports, and other materials it receives or develops concerning academic standards.

2. Work with the District Computer Service Center to develop programs to identify students who have and who have not followed recommended policies and procedures.

3. Establish and maintain close cooperation with the Los Angeles Unified School District and the California State Universities and Colleges.

H. The Office of the Chancellor could:

1. Communicate new policies to the public, to students, and to the staff.

2. Lend its force to maintaining standards of excellence in all courses and programs in the Los Angeles Community College District.

VI. MINORITY REPORTS

A. MINORITY REPORT FROM MARGARITA L. RAIGOZA, COUNSELOR, LOS ANGELES MISSION COLLEGE

I feel compelled to submit a minority report because in good conscience, though I agree with parts of the report, I cannot put my name on the larger report without indicating some of my differences. Before addressing myself to specific sections of the report I would first like to state that I favor the establishment of meaningful academic standards. I believe that when we assign grades, diplomas, degrees, honors, these marks of achievement must signify a certain level of quality and mastery. Otherwise the larger society finds such designations meaningless, and students as well as faculty no longer take their responsibilities in these areas seriously.

Assigning procedures to ensure academic standards of meaning and worth, however, should not mean disallowing students the right to take a course or program of study even though statistics and tests point to little chance of success on his part, nor does it mean establishing an authoritarian structure. If such be the case Minorities on the basis of tests and statistics should forget about education after the tenth grade.

Second, I think it is important to remember that we are a two-year institution, and that preparing for a four-year educational institution is only one of many course of studies which we offer our students. In our quest for academic standards I hope we do not become confused and thereby sacrifice or place less merit on other curriculum options. I feel that we are guilty of this in our report. In addition I feel that we, the instructional staff, have avoided accepting the full share of our responsibility in the decline of academic standards, and in our recommendations have placed the burden of change more on the student than ourselves.

I would like to address myself to three specific areas of the report. They are as follows:

1. That students be required to enroll in remedial classes before enrolling in regular classes requiring those skills; the criteria based on a specific diagnostic test.

   The population of Los Angeles is rapidly changing. Los Angeles City Schools population consists of more than 55% minority students, (hopefully, someday our District's population will reflect the same). Minority and lower socioeconomic populations in this country traditionally express feelings of powerlessness about controlling their lives, have hostile suspicion about the intentions of the dominant majority, especially in relation to themselves, and do poorly on standardized tests.

   Diagnostic tests are necessary as a tool to indicate skill level, but are not infallible instruments. Many students do not do well on tests (ignoring the cultural bias issue) because of a fear of the testing situation, fear of failure, and other such variables. If a student, after having taken the test, is apprised of his skill level and expected chance of success and still refuses the mandated remedial course, the student should have that right. Students should have a right of denying the test and going into a class that in all probability he will fail. The instructor has the right and the responsibility (if the case merits) of failing the student. Part of our educational responsibility is to encourage the student's right of choices, though they be negative. Perhaps after a few negative experiences the student who, in the past, questioned the advisement as a hostile means of keeping him down, or resented being told what to do, will see validity in the advisement from the negative experience, and will accept the need to strengthen his basic skills. It is possible, however, that the student might succeed in the course which the test indicated he should not pursue.

2. That 32 units of general education be required for eligibility for graduation.

   The University of California requires 24 units of general education for the B.A. The California State Universities require 40 units of general education for the B.A. The private universities require somewhere in the range between the UC and CSU systems. Are we in competition with the four-year institution? Are we confusing elitism for academic standards? Is the community college district to serve the different interests and needs of the community, or do we serve only one constituency? What havoc will it create in the vocational arts programs to require thirty-two units

of General Education courses in addition to the demands of the curriculum? More importantly, are we limiting the opportunity for the degree of A.A. to a small number of students, who in all probability will acquire the B.A. anyway, and making it unobtainable to those people able to gain more than a high school diploma but not enough for a B.A.? What is the community colleges' role and philosophy?

3. That students be required to have approval for their programs each semester.

Whenever the authority to give approval to a student's program or course of study is given we also may be inviting several other effects. It may take away the student's responsibility to assess his strengths and weaknesses in balancing and selecting his classes. It allows someone other than the student to decide what is best for him in terms of balancing his program, selecting the proper range of difficulty and meeting the demands of a course program. It can also lead to channeling students toward certain "unpopular" courses or instructors simply because their courses will not fill. When authority is taken from the student for his program it becomes much easier to cross the line of guidance into dictating.

In this vein to require transcripts from the high school, other than for students who aspire to a four-year educational institution which takes high school records into account (such as the UC system), is, I believe, another means of controlling students. Needless awareness of high school transcripts could lead to negative expectations of staff toward the student and thereby channel students in directions that support these "expectations." Do we believe in allowing students a "second chance?"

Are we doing justice to the student by paternalistically demanding approval of his program each semester, and then expecting him to suddenly act independently on a full-time job or in choosing his own program at a four-year college?

There are other statements in the report which disturb me, but which will be better critiqued by the constituency affected. Since the Report on Academic Standards was proposed as a means of raising issues and focusing the discussion, I would invite and urge faculty and students to study the document carefully before forming an opinion.

B. MINORITY REPORT FROM NEIL D. ADAMS, VOCATIONAL EDUCATION INSTRUCTOR, LOS ANGELES TRADE-TECHNICAL COLLEGE

In signing the final version of the Academic Standards Commission

Report, I wish to express a dissenting minority viewpoint relating to the requirements for the Associate in Science and the Associate in Arts degree. The Academic Standards Commission Report recommends that the general education requirements for both the above degrees be increased from the present minimum of 15 units to a minimum of 32 units.

Inasmuch as only a minority of students enrolled in the Community Colleges will transfer to four year colleges and universities, the above requirement would constitute an undue hardship for students with an occupational or vocational major. These students aspire to enter upon a career immediately upon graduation from the community colleges. In most vocational programs, 48 units are required for the major and are probably minimal requirements for a successful career. An additional 32 units of general education would mean that a two-year degree would be stretched into a 2½ to 3 year degree, and would probably prevent many of these students from completing the degree requirements.

For the above reasons, I wish to go on record as opposing these specific recommendations in the Academic Standards Commission Report.

APPENDICES

MEMBERSHIP ROSTER

Commission Members	Representing
Neil D. Adams Professor of Air Conditioning Technology Trade Technical College	Vocational Education
Leslie P. Boston Professor of English Valley College	Humanities
Sidney H. Elman Professor of Political Science Pierce College	District Academic Senate
Arnold C. Fletcher Professor of History Valley College	American Federation of Teachers
Louis F. Hilleary Director, Instructional Development Educational Planning and Development	District
Richard Lawrence Assistant Superintendent, Support Services Los Angeles Unified School District	Los Angeles Unified School District
William Loiterman* Associate Professor of Political Science Harbor College	Social Sciences
John T. McCuen Vice Chancellor Educational Planning and Development	District
John A. Palmer Vice President for Academic Affairs California State University at Los Angeles	California State University and College System
Eugene Phelps Director Office of Human Affairs	District
Margarita L. Raigoza Counselor Mission College	Counseling and Small Colleges

(continued)

*Served to January, 1978

Commission Members	Representing
James Simmons Professor of English City College	Communications
Jack Smith Dean of Instruction Harbor College	District Administrators Association
Ruth S. Stein** Counselor City College	Counseling
George Wistreich Professor of Microbiology East Los Angeles College	Sciences

**Served to December, 1977

EXCERPTS FROM CAMPUS REPORTS

----Instead of identfying students who need remedial courses in basic skills, faculty feel they must dilute their test methods, test standards, and grade standards to accommodate student levels.

----A number of departments have expanded one-semester programs to two-semester programs to stop declining enrollment and failures because of lack of basic skills on the part of the student.

----The faculty prefers students to be screened for possession of basic or essential skills prior to admittance to regular college classes and recommends a screening process for all entering students.

----We are becoming a one-year college because we are unable to offer the smaller advanced classes within departments. This relates to Board Rules and the student contact hours for each teacher. It is recommended that the larger entry classes support the departmental advanced smaller classes.

----Los Angeles City College Report

----Recommendation: that we realize that many of our students need remedial work and are only destructive to themselves and academic standards if they enroll in college level academic courses.

----Recommendation: that we realize that, if we conform to the rules and standards of the college, some students will fail.

----Recommendation: that we must be careful not to have unlimited growth or to try to attract students who are not able to succeed.

----While there has been a lot of advertising for our expanding "fun and games" and "therapy" courses, there has been little advertising for our hard core academic courses.

----Los Angeles Harbor College Report

----"We are trapped by the necessity of getting and keeping large numbers of students--qualified or not--motivated or not--possessing the necessary skills or not. Weekly student contact hours is the name of the game..." "Many efforts have been made and many programs inaugurated to attract and hold students. Many of these efforts are commendable, others not..."

----The teaching-learning relationship, the very basis of our institutional existence, is seen as being low priority in the affairs of

the District. The teaching-learning relationship supports expanding programs and experiments while its own budget is increasingly threatened and tightened. Class scheduling becomes a farce as number of enrollees, not course subject matter, becomes increasingly the sole criterion for class continuation or cancellation.

----This project raises a serious question: Is the District interested in encouraging the separate colleges to maintain and pursue academic excellence within their communities?

----Los Angeles Pierce College Report

----Finding: there are too many grade changes.

----Finding: grade changes are submitted to delete D's, F's or Inc's to improve the student GPA's.

----Finding: there appears to be no policy, procedure, or method to be followed by a student who wishes to petition for a certificate.... Also, there appears to be no standard for such programs.

----Los Angeles Southwest College Report

----Finding: SCAT tests have been abolished.

----Finding: test results are meaningless.

----Finding: placement tests are not required.

----Finding: classified help, rather than counselors, frequently handle the entire enrollment procedure.

----Finding: grades have become meaningless.

----Los Angeles Trade Technical College Report

----...a student may graduate from Valley College having completed no course which would normally be considered general education except Political Science I, which is required to meet the state mandated course in federal, state, and local government; with no knowledge of the arts, the humanities, the natural and physical sciences, or the social sciences (except Political Science I); and without the ability to read, write, speak, or solve mathematical problems with college level skill.

----In short, the committee finds that the college standards for awarding the associate degrees are so lax that the degrees have become virtually meaningless. The present degree program offers the student no guidelines to follow to achieve a well-rounded education; it misleads students by allowing them to believe that any collection of 60 units merits a degree; it misleads employers and the general public alike by allowing them to believe that holders of our degrees have all completed a well-rounded college-level education; and worst of all, it destroys the integrity of the degrees which do represent the completion of an appropriate program.

----Los Angeles Valley College Report

EXTRACT FROM BOARD RULES

ARTICLE II

ACADEMIC PROBATION AND DISQUALIFICATION

8200. ACADEMIC PROBATION. A student shall be placed on academic probation if, after he has attempted a minimum of 12 units of work, any one of the following conditions prevails.

8200.10 Low Grade Point Average. His grade point average is less than a "C" (2.0).

8200.11 Transfer Student. He is a transfer student from another collegiate institution with a grade point average less than a "C" (2.0).

8200.12 Non-Completion of Courses. He has been readmitted subsequent to disqualification but has not removed grade point deficiencies through completion of courses at some other accredited institution.

8200.13 Withdrawn Units. The total number of "W" (withdrawn) units exceeds the total number of units completed.

In addition, a student may be placed on probation-at-entrance when his high school record and/or his score on achievement tests used for entrance are unsatisfactory.

8201. CONTINUATION OF ACADEMIC PROBATION. A student will be continued on academic probation when the Scholarship Standards Committee or other agency determines that he has earned a "C" (2.0) or better grade point average during his probationary period but is still deficient in cumulative grade points. A student may be continued on academic probation when the Scholarship Standards Committee, or a similar agency, deems that he has made significant improvement in academic achievement but has not been able to reach a grade point average of "C" (2.0) during the period of probation.

8201.10 Removal from Academic Probation. A student shall be removed from academic probation when he has earned sufficient grade points to offset previously accrued deficiencies and has therefore achieved a cumulative grade point average of "C" (2.0) or better.

8202. ACADEMIC DISQUALIFICATION. A student is subject to academic disqualification if (1) he fails to maintain a "C" (2.0) average for any semester while he is on probation, except that he is not subject to disqualification if his cumulative grade point average is "C" (2.0) or better or (2) the total number of "W" units exceeds the total number of completed units for any semester while he is on probation.

8202.10 Approval of President and Notification of Students. All academic disqualifications shall be approved by the President or his representative prior to the notification of disqualified students.

8202.11 Admission of Disqualified Students at Another College. Academic disqualification at one of the community colleges of this District will prevent the admission of the disqualified student for one or more semesters at any of the other community colleges of the District.

8202.12 Readmission after Academic Disqualification. Readmission after academic disqualification may be applied for by a disqualified student by written petition addressed to the Scholarship Standards Committee or similar committee. Readmission may be granted, denied, or postponed, subject to fulfillment of conditions prescribed by the committee.

SAMPLE DEPARTMENTAL STATEMENTS

ART DEPARTMENT REGULATIONS

THE GRADES OF "D" AND "F" INVARIABLY RESULT FROM ONE OR MORE OF THE FOLLOWING AILMENTS:

1. inability to accept or profit from criticism
2. inability to follow directions
3. incomplete or inconclusive work
4. failure to understand assignments
5. poor work habits
6. lack of motivation, industry or initiative
7. lack of ability to produce college level work in:

   communication skills
   neatness
   organization

THE GRADE OF "C"

A STANDARD COLLEGE GRADE INDICATING SUCCESSFUL PERFORMANCE

This grade is earned as a result of:

1. satisfactory performance score
2. satisfactory examination score
3. complete and prompt oral response and performance related to the course
4. evidence of ability to profit from direction, instruction and criticism
5. evidence of ability to deal successfully with the abstract ideas of the course
6. evidence of sufficient success to warrant continued participation in the sequential courses of a given subject.

THIS IS THE COLLEGE DEFINITION OF THE "C" GRADE

PLEASE DO NOT OVERLOOK THE REQUIREMENT FOR A GRADE OF "C" OR BETTER FOR CONTINUANCE INTO COURSES REQUIRING PREREQUISITES!

Los Angeles City College

STANDARDS FOR ENGLISH 1 ESSAYS

To the student: the main purpose of English 1 is to help you learn to write expository prose in such a way that a thoughtful, mature, educated reader will pay respectful attention to your ideas. The following criteria may guide your development as a writer. Please note that these criteria are concerned only with measurable achievement, not with the amount of effort that goes into writing the essay.

A "C" essay is a competent work, a success. It states a clear thesis and supports that thesis with factual evidence. The thesis is appropriate for an essay of the length assigned, neither too broad nor too narrow in scope, and is adequately developed. Most of the secondary opinions relate clearly to the thesis and are supported. Generally, each paragraph contains 1) one subordinate idea clearly related to the thesis and 2) details explaining and supporting that idea. The train of thought is generally clear. The ideas expressed may not be particularly original, but they are more than mere platitudes. The writer has mastered basic grammar: his sentences are nearly all complete and not run together; he has used few or no dangling or misplaced modifiers; his pronouns consistently and clearly refer to antecedents and agree in number with those antecedents; his subjects and verbs agree in number; he does not carelessly shift tense; his diction, spelling, and punctuation generally follow the conventions. The writer has carefully proofread the paper.

A "B" essay demonstrates not only the competence of the "C" essay in form and content but, in addition, shows originality in both style and concepts. The diction is accurate and economical. The writer has skillfully used the concepts of emphasis and proportion. Details are more vivid and abundant than in a "C" essay.

An "A" essay contains ideas unusually significant, original, or otherwise exceptionally rich. The supporting details are abundant, unusually vivid, and strikingly appropriate. The reasoning is such that a thoughtful, educated reader can find the ideas, if not necessarily convincing, at least well worth considering. The writer is aware of the exact meanings and flavor of his words. His sentences possess special fluency, force, or elegance, and he uses with skill coordination, subordination, parallelism, emphasis, and metaphor. The "A" essay contains no simple errors in spelling, punctuation, capitalization, or in the construction of sentences or paragraphs.

A "D" essay lacks one or more of the qualities named above for a "C" essay. Its thesis may be trite, insufficiently explored, or both. It may fall below the "C" level because its thesis, and thus its development, is too narrow, too broad, or otherwise inappropriate for the paper assigned. A "D" essay frequently supplies insufficient evidence for its thesis and subordinate opinions. Its organization is unclear; its paragraphs are underdeveloped; fragmentary or comma-spliced sentences occur

more than once or twice; pronouns often do not refer to clear antecedents. The paper may contain several simple errors in spelling or punctuation.

An "F" essay either does not clearly respond to the assignment (and is thus given an "F" despite its merits) or lacks several of the qualities named for the "C" paper. It may contain a trivial or poorly explored thesis. The paper may be only a collection of loosely related opinions. It probably will show a poor grasp of paragraph organization. It may contain enough fragmentary or comma-spliced sentences to suggest that the writer does not understand what a sentence is. The paper may contain enough disagreements between noun and pronoun or between subject and verb to suggest that the writer has not mastered the concept of agreement. It often contains more than a few errors in spelling and punctuation.

Los Angeles Valley College

GRADE DEFINITIONS

A - an HONOR GRADE awarded for EXCELLENCE. This grade is earned as a result of: consistently high examination scores; consistently accurate, complete and prompt written and oral work related to the course; evidence of ability to deal resourcefully with abstract ideas of the course; evidence of superior performance in the skills related to the course; and promise of success in fields related to the subject matter of the course.

B - an HONOR GRADE awarded for COMPETENCE. This grade is earned as a result of: good examination scores; accurate, complete and prompt written and oral work related to the course; evidence of ability to deal competently with abstract ideas of the course; evidence of good performance in the skills related to the course; and promise of continued success in the sequential courses of the given subject.

C - a STANDARD COLLEGE GRADE awarded for SUCCESSFUL PERFORMANCE. This grade is earned as a result of: satisfactory examination scores; generally accurate, complete and prompt written and oral work related to the course; evidence of ability to deal successfully with the abstract ideas of the course; evidence of satisfactory performance in the skills related to the course; and evidence of sufficient success to warrant continued participation in the sequential courses as the given subject.*

D - a SUBSTANDARD GRADE awarded for MEETING ONLY MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS. This grade is earned as a result of: consistently low, but passing, examination scores; generally inaccurate, incomplete or late written and oral work related to the course; lack of evidence of ability to deal adequately with the abstract ideas of the course; evidence of barely satisfactory performance in the skills related to the course; or insufficient understanding of the subject matter of the course to warrant continued participation in the sequential courses of the given subject.

F - a NON-PASSING GRADE awarded for FAILING TO MEET MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS. This grade is earned as a result of: predominantly non-passing examination scores; inaccurate, incomplete or late written and oral work related to the course; insufficient evidence of ability to deal adequately with the abstract ideas of the course; evidence of unsatisfactory performance in the skills related to the course; or an inadequate understanding of the subject matter of the course.

INC - an INCOMPLETE GRADE awarded for PASSING BUT UNFINISHED WORK. This grade indicates that an important project of the course--term paper, final examination, drawing, experiment or other item (if missed for medical or other sufficient reason)--is missing, but can be submitted to complete the work of the course.

*In certain cases a grade of "A" or "B" may be required by departmental policy, for enrollment in more advanced courses.

Office of Instruction
Los Angeles City College
October 18, 1968

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